

VZCZCXRO3230
OO RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHNV #0977 3361725
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 011725Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0575
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS MONROVIA 000977

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [LI](#)

SUBJECT: JAILBREAK AT MONROVIA CENTRAL PRISON

¶1. A reported 135 prisoners escaped from the Monrovia Central Prison (MCP) December 1. Liberia National Police (LNP) immediately set up roadblocks and searched neighborhoods around the MCP and up to 68 prisoners have reportedly been recaptured. The LNP Emergency Response Unit has been deployed as well. The MCP is located less than one mile from the Embassy compound.

¶2. There is no immediate threat towards the Embassy or the resident Amcit population. RSO sent out a message advising Mission personnel avoid the area surrounding the MCP, Barclay Training Center, and UN Drive in the vicinity of Gurley and Center Streets. RSO also requested that the LNP detachment at the Embassy be increased. The consular section has sent out a warden message with similar information. The Embassy does not plan to take any other steps at this time, but will monitor the situation closely.

¶3. According to several UNMIL sources, a disturbance began when prisoners began protesting not receiving speedy court dates. The prisoners then pushed through the Nepalese Formed Police Unit (FPU) guarding the prison gate to escape. According to the sources, the FPU used teargas and fired warning shots.

¶4. Comment: The MCP is severely overcrowded, holding four times its capacity. About 800 prisoners are held there, with 93% of those in pre-trial detention.

THOMAS-GREENFIELD